

Day 6 - It Isn't Easy

Serving isn't easy! Does God expect his people to serve? Yes! Does he gift and equip his people for it? Yes! But, it isn't easy. Serving is often difficult, and it is always work.

Read *Ephesians 4:11-12*.

- Why were the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers given?
(to equip the saints for the WORK of ministry)
- Who is to do the work of ministry?
(the saints; that means everyone who is in Christ!)

Some would have you believe that serving is always effortless joy if you love God and are using your spiritual gift, but Paul seems to think it can also be hard work (Eph 4:12; Col 1:29). It takes time. It makes you tired. It is often less enjoyable than doing other, easier things. (Let's not even mention that it requires dealing with sinful people just like us!) But, serving God is also more fulfilling and rewarding than any other work we can do.

Read *Hebrews 6:10-12*.

What an encouragement we receive from these verses! God does not overlook our service, but rewards it with assurance that we will receive the promised inheritance of eternal life in Christ Jesus. There is no greater reward, nothing more fulfilling, than the assurance that we have salvation in Christ. Hebrews says our service leads to that assurance as we become more and more Christlike. Not only that, but service to God is the only kind of work that will endure for all eternity. Why wouldn't we want to labor for something so important?

Many leaders of churches and ministries have made the mistake of assuming that the saints in their churches and ministries (and we are all saints if we are in Christ) are not devoted servants of Christ. Leaders assume that they themselves are the type of devoted, disciplined servant that would work hard for the cause of Christ in various ways, but others are not. Therefore, they try to make serving God and others "easy." I don't want to insult you by making service to God sound so easy that it must not be very important. I wouldn't want to give my time to something like that either. This will not be easy! This will often be hard work! But it will always be worth it!

So, let me encourage you: Serve, sacrifice, work hard, exhaust yourself in service to Christ! You will never do anything more fulfilling or more valuable than that!

Close by reading *Acts 20:34-35*; consider the blessing of working hard for the Lord; and pray that you would be devoted and disciplined to the service of God and others.